

**To:** Jones, Enesta[Jones.Enesta@epa.gov]  
**From:** energy@morningconsult.cpro30.com  
**Sent:** Tue 8/18/2015 12:35:00 PM  
**Subject:** Morning Consult Energy, Presented by America's Natural Gas Alliance: Shell Cleared to Drill in the Arctic; EPA to Face Grilling By Multiple Committees

by [Colleen Leahy \(@cocoblerg\)](#)

## Today's Washington Brief

- The Interior Department on Monday issued a long-awaited and long-contested permit to Royal Dutch Shell to drill in the Arctic Ocean. The department said it will allow Shell to drill an exploratory well since the company has complied with the department's earlier mandate that it obtain a ship capable of responding to a blown well. ([Wall Street Journal](#))
- When Congress comes back in September, the Environmental Protection Agency will be facing tough questions about the Animas River spill in Durango, Colo. earlier this month. The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Science Committee are all considering holding hearings on the Colorado spill. ([Morning Consult](#))
- And EPA has begun its own investigation into the spill. The agency's Office of Inspector General said its probe would focus on the "cause of, and the EPA's response to" the spill. ([The Hill](#))

## Today's Business Brief

- After making headlines this year for divesting its government pension fund of coal, Norway announced Monday that it will divest its sovereign-wealth fund – which is the world's largest – of investments in four companies involved in producing palm oil and contributing to the destruction of tropical rainforests. ([the Wall Street Journal](#))
- Houston-based Black Elk Energy is facing multiple criminal charges over a 2012 incident in Louisiana that killed three workers and injured several others. The company is charged with five counts of violating federal health and safety laws and one count of violating the Clean

Water Act. ([Houston Public Media](#))

- BP said on Monday that a key unit at its Indiana refinery is still shut down more than a week after its initial closure. The company said it is continuing repairs. Gas price spikes in the Midwest caused by the unit's closure appear to have steadied. ([Nasdaq](#))

## Today's Chart Review

**Unplanned refinery outage leads to higher Midwest gasoline prices from the Energy Information Administration**

## Mark Your Calendars (All Eastern Times)

### Tuesday

Heritage Foundation [discussion](#): Examining Arctic Opportunities and Capabilities: Does the U.S. Have the Infrastructure, Ships and Equipment Required?, @1:30pm

Earnings report for [Canadian Solar Inc.](#)

### Wednesday

Solar Energy Industries Association [webinar](#): Solar & The Clean Power Plan: What You Should Know To Drive Your Business, @1pm

Environmental and Energy Study Institute [webinar](#): On-Bill Financing: An Energy Efficiency Solution for Member-Owned Utilities in the Midwest, @2pm

Earnings report for [Solar Power Inc.](#)

### Thursday

No events today.

### Friday

No events today.

## General

**Congress Prepares Probes into EPA Spill**

**from Morning Consult by Davis Burroughs**

At least four Congressional committees are considering hearings on the August 5 incident, in which toxic wastewater surged out of the Gold King Mine near Durango, Colo.

**EPA inspector general begins investigation into mine spill**  
**from The Hill by Devin Henry**

The Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Inspector General (OIG) said Monday it will begin investigation the Aug. 5 incident that sent 3 million gallons of toxic sludge into Colorado's Animas River.

**Norway Oil Fund Excludes Firms on Environment Risks**  
**from the Wall Street Journal by Kjetil Malkenes Hovland**

Norway's sovereign-wealth fund said it would exclude four companies from its investments due to environmental risks posed by palm oil plantations.

**California green jobs program failing to meet expectations**  
**from The Hill by Devin Henry**

The Clean Energy Jobs Act, a voter-approved program that raised taxes on corporations to fund energy-efficiency construction projects, has brought in less money than anticipated and has created only one-tenth the jobs its backers promised in 2012.

**Futures Signal S&P 500 Running Out of Steam After Two-Day Climb**  
**from Bloomberg by Roxana Zega**

U.S. stock-index futures declined on growing concern that a rout in emerging-market assets and commodities will hurt global growth prospects, while investors weighed the implications of tighter monetary policy.

## **Oil & Natural Gas**

**US oil prices near 6-year lows**  
**from CNBC by Reuters**

U.S. oil prices fell towards six-year lows on Tuesday after stock markets tumbled in China.

**U.S. Issues Arctic Drilling Permit to Shell**  
**from the Wall Street Journal by Amy Harder**

The U.S. gave Royal Dutch Shell a final green light to drill for oil in the Arctic Ocean, providing it a long-sought victory and escalating a battle with environmentalists.

**Black Elk Energy Faces Criminal Charges Over November 2012 Rig Explosion**  
from Houston Public Media by Andrew Schneider

The Houston-based oil platform operator faces six criminal counts in relation to the explosion, which left three workers dead.

**IMF Suggests Saudi Arabia Cut Spending, Rely Less on Oil Revenue**  
from the Wall Street Journal by Ahmed Al Omran

As dropping oil prices and high public spending erode Saudi Arabia's reserves, the International Monetary Fund on Monday called on the kingdom to undertake a spate of fiscal changes and diversify away from its reliance on the commodity to boost growth and create jobs.

**BP Says Key Unit at Indiana Refinery Remains Shut**  
from Nasdaq by Dow Jones Business News

BP Plc said in a statement Monday that a key unit of its refinery in Indiana remains shut, but said it has met all of its contractual obligations since the outage hit more than a week ago.

**Unused oil and gas gear threatens habitat, drinking water**  
from E&E by Corbin Hiar

A well that blew out 75 years ago in the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas has been intermittently leaking oily saltwater ever since, imperiling whooping-crane habitat and drinking water for millions of Texans. Hundreds of similarly inactive oil wells remain a major challenge for the Fish and Wildlife Service, which lacks legal muscle and funding to address the problem.

## Utilities and Infrastructure

**New York's First Heat Wave in 2 Years Sparks Power Price Surge**  
from Bloomberg by Harry Weber

New York City's first official heat wave since 2013 boosted power prices, as demand rose to the highest level in almost three weeks on the largest U.S. grid.

## Climate

**What Wikipedia edits can tell us about the politicization of science**

**from the Washington Post by Chris Mooney**

On Wikipedia, the science of acid rain is still contentious — even though the issue itself has largely vanished from public debate.

**Can an Islamic climate change declaration inspire 1.6B Muslims?**

**from E&E by Lisa Friedman**

Islamic leaders from around the globe Tuesday will unveil a declaration calling on the world's 1.6 billion Muslims to embrace climate change action as part of their religious duty.

## **Renewables**

**Indian Airport First in World to Be Completely Solar Powered**

**from Bloomberg by Anindya Upadhyay**

An airport in the south of India is the world's first to run completely on solar energy following commissioning of a 12-megawatt project overseen by Bosch Ltd.

## **Coal**

**Mississippi Power wins rate relief for troubled Kemper 'clean coal' plant**

**from Utility Dive by Randy Lilleston**

The Kemper plant now is expected to cost more than \$6 billion to get online, and the state Public Service Commission voted 2-1 last week to approve the increase. There's a lot at stake: Both the Obama administration and the coal industry want to show that a coal gasification and carbon capture and storage plant is a practical resource.

**Engie Said to Plan Sale of Over \$1 Billion in Asian Coal Plants**

**from Bloomberg by Joyce Koh, George Smith Alexander and Fathiya Dahrul**

Engie, the French utility giant formerly known as GDF Suez SA, plans to sell more than \$1 billion of stakes in Asian coal-fired power plants, people with knowledge of the matter said.

**How Japan pushes coal on the world**

**from Politico by Darius Dixon**

While the U.S. backs away from its dirtiest power source, its closest ally in Asia is building, selling and financing coal plants worldwide.

## Opinions, Editorials & Perspectives

### Even Coal Country Will Comply With Clean Power Plan from Forbes by Ken Silverstein

Will the perpetual political spin, corporate campaigns and legal challenges serve to block President Obama's plan to cut carbon emissions? It's unlikely — even in coal country, which is subtly making its own progress.

#### **A Message from America's Natural Gas Alliance:**

Natural gas puts America in charge of its energy future. Clean, affordable electricity from natural gas means we're cooling our homes and turning on our lights while also reducing emissions. In fact, in April — for the first time ever — natural gas was the leading source of electricity in the United States. It's no coincidence that CO2 emissions from US power plants were also at their lowest in 27 years. America's Natural Gas. Think About It.

## Research Reports, Issue Briefs & Case Studies

### Texas electric grid serves record-high power demand from the Energy Information Administration

During the recent heat wave in Texas, the Electricity Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), the operator of the electric grid covering most of the state, set a new record for electricity use when demand for electricity reached 69.8 gigawatts (GW) between 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. on August 10. ERCOT has been able to handle this extremely high demand without any system emergencies.

#### **A Message from America's Natural Gas Alliance:**

Natural gas is the fastest and most affordable way for America to curb green house gas emissions. It's also the cleanest and most reliable way for America to meet its energy needs. It's no coincidence that natural gas produced the largest share of America's power for the first time ever in April — also the cleanest month for US power plant emissions in 27 years. America's Natural Gas. Clean is Powerful.

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*The Morning Consult  
Morning Consult, P.O. Box 27068  
Washington District of Columbia 20038  
United States*

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